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STONE IMAGES FROM TARASCAN TERRITORY, MEXICO

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In the December number of the *American Anthropologist* appeared an interesting article by Dr Cyrus Thomas on stone images from mounds and ancient graves of our southern states. The author called attention to "a somewhat conventionalized form indicative of local origin." Some eight specimens were described or referred to, four of which were illustrated in the paper. Two others of the eight, while not pictured by Dr Thomas, are figured in Thruston's *Antiquities of Tennessee*. There are but two points in which all of the eight agree—(1) the sitting posture and (2) the slanting, upraised face. The position of the hands and feet varies considerably. In three out of the eight the lower part is said to be incomplete—but rudely, if at all, worked to shape. General Thruston's specimens are notable in the agreement they show in the round, broad faces. The headdress or hair varies considerably. To show this we may tabulate the eight specimens thus :

1. Castilian Springs, Tennessee—fillet.
2. Castilian Springs, Tennessee—cap.
3. Bartow county, Georgia—knot.
4. Bartow county, Georgia—handle.
5. Trousdale county, Tennessee—head bare.
6. Smith county, Tennessee—head bare.
7. Roan county, Tennessee—chignon.
8. Union county, Illinois—triangle incised on back.

All of the specimens are emphatically stated as from within the "stone-grave area." This is likewise the area of the carved or engraved shell-gorgetts.

Stone figures of a very similar type to this are found in one part of Mexico. In the Tarascan region of the states of Michoacan and Jalisco the seated figure of stone with upraised face is both characteristic and common. We may describe and illustrate several of these. It would be easy to mention many more.

No. 1, from Kalatempa, is in the museum of the state college at Morelia, Michoacan. It is of sandstone and is of indifferent workmanship. The back is nearly vertical and plane. The hands, which are but rudely indicated, rest upon the chest.

The lower part is badly made. A small prominence near the base is probably a rude representation of the sexual organs. The face is absolutely comparable with those of General Thruston's figures, being round, broad, flat, and slanting. An incised line across the head (partly concealed by the label) apparently indicates a headdress. The figure is seven and a quarter inches high. (See figure 1, plate v.)

No. 2 is from near Tzintzuntzan. It is a sandstone figure of a female. In general character, head position, genitalia, etc., it is much like the preceding. The hands rest upon the chest and the arms are folded against the sides. The headdress, with incised lines at top, is somewhat shown in the cut (figure 2). The woman bears a child strapped to her back; the infant faces backward. The height of this figure, which is also in the Morelia museum, is five inches.

No. 3, from Tzintzuntzan, was presented to me by Mr H. P. McCormick. It is of a reddish-brown stone, in texture much like sandstone. It is very like the two preceding, but the legs are seen to be bent under the figure (figure 4, plate v). The broad, round, upraised face with eye-holes and mouth simply scooped out, and with low, broad nose, is of the same type as the above and as General Thruston's specimens. There is no cap or headdress. The hands and arms are rudely made, but distinct and in the usual position. The figure measures four inches high. (See figures 3, 4.)

No. 4 is the most remarkable piece of work I have seen from Tarascan territory. It is from near Guadalajara, in Jalisco, and was presented to me by Mr D. A. Wilson. It is made of a fairly compact, olive-gray material. It is a grooved axe. The whole surface is polished; less about the groove than elsewhere. The edge, made with much care, is fairly sharp. The upper end is a finely executed human head, with the face upraised at about the usual angle for this type. The groove comes at the location of the neck, while the arms, carefully defined at the sides, are bent so as to bring the hands—not detailed—to the upper part of the chest. The figure is not squat, but seated, and the bent legs are admirably developed. Examining the head carefully, we find the face broad and round, the eyes carefully worked out, the mouth projecting and with the commissure of the lips marked, the nose well made. Over the head fits a headdress like a close-fitting cap, covering the ears, which cause it to pro-



1



2



3



4

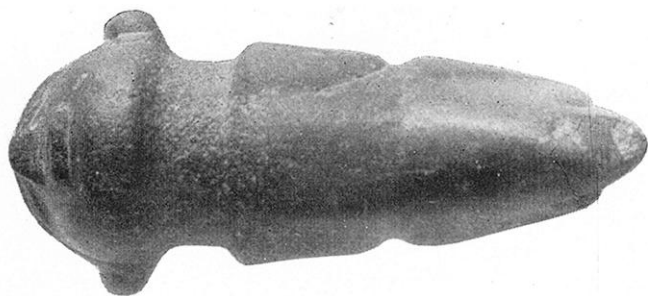
STONE IMAGES FROM TARASCAN TERRITORY, MEXICO



5



6



7

VIEWS OF A FIGURINE AX FROM MEXICO

ject in two regular rounded prominences. The pictures convey a better idea of this pretty piece than does a description (figures 5, 6, 7, plate vi). This specimen measures four and a half inches.

This occurrence in Tarascan territory of stone figures with up-raised faces of the same type as the Tennessee specimens appears to me of considerable interest. I have recently called attention to the finding in the same part of Mexico of a beautifully carved shell gorget, strictly comparable with those of the stone-grave area.¹ The occurrence of a second so characteristic type in the two areas is certainly curious.

As to the meaning of the upturned face, I am personally inclined to believe that Haygood was right in considering it to indicate adoration. I cannot find in any of the figures given by Thomas or Thruston, nor in the Mexican specimens, any reason for considering the heads artificially deformed; in fact, every specimen distinctly evidences against such a view.

CONNECTING LINKS.—Volume 1, part 4, of the Publications of the Louisiana Historical Society has just appeared. If the reader will turn to plate II, figure 1, opposite page 25, he will see a handle of a dish very much in the form of the head of a monkey or other animal. Opposite page 372 in the report of the Smithsonian Institution for 1876, in my article on the Latimer collection, will be seen six handles of dishes very much of the same form and motive, and presenting a very striking similarity. This type of modelled handle luted on to dishes has been treated by Professor William H. Holmes, and in these two examples we have Porto Rico on the one hand and the mound in Louisiana brought into interesting comparison. It will be recollected also that Professor Holmes called attention to the meander pattern, figure 9 in the same paper, and in the paper on the Guesde collection, in Guadeloupe (Smithsonian Report, 1884, pp. 828-832), I have spoken of the weaving of bands of cotton around the arms and legs of figures; also historically mentioned with regard to the Indians of Louisiana.

These little threads of connection are very interesting in the light of discoveries which have lately been made in southern Florida by Mr F. H. Cushing.

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¹ Proc. Davenport Acad. Sci., vol. vi, pp. 173-178.